



STATE OF MONTANA  
Department of Administration  
State Information Technology Services Division



MEMORANDUM

Date: February 28, 2017

To: Tracy Stone-Manning, Chief of Staff  
Governor's Office

From: Sherriff Leo Dutton, Chairman  
Statewide Interoperability Governing Board

Cc: Siri Smillie, Policy Advisor  
Governor's Office

Ron Baldwin, State Chief Information Officer  
Department of Administration

Subject: Recommendations for the ongoing operation and maintenance of the trunked land mobile radio and microwave systems

Executive Order 16-2015, which provides for the Statewide Interoperability Governing Board (SIGB), states: "...the SIGB shall: E. recommend strategies to the Governor for effective implementation of the SIGB's plan for ongoing operation and maintenance of the statewide land mobile radio system in Montana."

Regarding this directive, the SIGB has adopted the following recommendations:

1. The current model of many system asset owners (over 55 agencies own infrastructure of some type in the system) does not work. It is too complicated to get anything done and the procurement rules and schedules for all of the various owners do not align. To resolve this issue, **the SIGB recommends that a single state agency manage the system.**

This single agency would be responsible for day to day operation, maintenance, and securing the necessary resources to fulfill the requirements of the system. **The SIGB recommends that the Montana Department of Justice (DOJ) be given the responsibility to manage the operation and maintenance of the trunked land mobile radio and microwave systems in state law. Specifically, the Montana**



Mitchell Building 125 North Roberts PO Box 200113  
Helena, Montana 59620-0113 406.444.2700 | Fax 406.444.2701





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**Highway Patrol (MHP) should be designated to lead and support the system's governance.** MHP's connection with the State's public safety community clearly places it in a unique position for leadership and to communicate with stakeholders with experience and mutual understanding of the critical nature of interoperable communications and specifically the trunked land mobile radio (LMR) system. DOJ's support of the proposed management of the trunked land mobile radio and microwave systems is contingent upon DOJ receiving the necessary resources (FTE and funding) to fulfill these responsibilities. **Therefore, the SIGB recommends that funding in the amount of \$925,600 in SFY 2018 and \$485,600 in SFY 2019 be appropriated to provide DOJ/MHP with the required resources.**

2. The SIGB also recommends that state funding for the trunked land mobile radio and microwave systems maintenance and upgrades be appropriated. The number of lives that depend on these systems - and the liability that both the State of Montana and local governments face should communications fail due to any systems failures are too great to ignore. The trunked land mobile radio and microwave systems are a critical piece of the state's public safety communications infrastructure.

Attached to this memorandum are two funding options for your consideration. The first (option 1) is considered the minimum, and provides a budgetary number for the minimum software upgrade to the system. This is very similar to the previous budget request from two years ago in that it does the minimum software upgrade and does not address any future requirements. The second (option 2) not only accomplishes the minimum software upgrade, but it also accomplishes the following:

- Upgrades the system software to an even newer release than option 1
- This is a "jump upgrade" and does two upgrades at the same time
- Replaces the existing MHP dispatch positions
- These are completely out of support and facilitates the "jump upgrade" savings
- Creates a fully-redundant network so that there is no single point of failure in the system core
- Begins to convert initial communications sites to 800 MHz for improved system performance

As you can see, option 2 will certainly cost more, but because of the economies of combining multiple projects and upgrades, we are spending our tax dollars more wisely by getting more accomplished than doing the projects separately. Most importantly, these upgrades will begin to address many of the long-standing perception issues with the system and create a solid foundation upon which to build and grow support. **It is**





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**therefore the recommendation of the SIGB that funding in amount of \$6.9 million be appropriated to DOJ/MHP to fund option 2 as detailed in the attachment.**

3. The trunked land mobile radio system requires that the radio, dispatch and control subsystems be connected or “linked” by a transport network or “backbone”. Currently the trunked land mobile radio system is dependent on the statewide microwave system that is operated and maintained by DOJ/MHP. DOJ/MHP requires Maintenance Services from the primary microwave network vendor Aviat Networks. Attached to this memorandum is a Maintenance Services proposal from Aviat Networks. **The SIGB recommends that DOJ/MHP execute a 3-year agreement with Aviat Networks for maintenance services to ensure the ongoing operation and maintenance of the statewide microwave “backbone” and funding in the amount of \$428,508 be appropriated to DOJ/MHP to fund the agreement.**

In closing, it should be noted that all of the recommendations included in this memorandum will require legislation. These recommendations will create the governance model and provide the required resources to maintain the current systems, but will have a small overall impact to the state budget and are critically important for the future success of public safety communications in Montana.

If you have any questions, concerns, or would like more details, please do not hesitate to reach out to me and we can schedule a briefing.



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